Swanland U3A Disability Policy

Statement Of Intent

Swanland u3a recognises its responsibilities and legal obligations in ensuring, as far as is reasonably possible, that people with disabilities are both afforded equal opportunities and are not discriminated against in our local organisation for a reason relating to their disability.

We will take all reasonable steps and develop procedures and practices to ensure that peo- ple with disabilities can attend the meetings and Interest Group activities of their choice without necessarily needing a companion / carer with them.

When reviewing this policy, the Committee member responsible will consult with the following:

- Swanland u3a Committee
- Convenors of Interest groups - The Membership

Aims of the policy

Members will not discriminate on the basis of disability and will not treat a colleague less fa- vourably for reasons of disability. All members are to be treated with dignity and respect ; disabled people have a right to participate in our activities just like other members.

Every member of our u3a is expected and encouraged to show consideration towards disa- bled members and to help implement this policy and related procedures. We should all be aware that disabilities take many forms and are not always visible.

Discrimination on the grounds of disability will not be tolerated.

Roles And Responsibilities.

We have appointed an Accessibility Officer whose contact details can be found in the Accessibility Policy. There is an expectation that they will work across the two policy areas.

A. Executive Committee

1. To work with members, convenors and (where applicable) outside agencies to implement ‘reasonable steps ’so that a disabled member can access activities. These will be incorporated into a plan as appropriate and implemented according to a realistic time scale.

2. When identifying ‘reasonable steps ’the following will be considered:
   a) Whether taking particular steps would be effective in overcoming the difficulties experienced by a disabled member(s) in gaining access to a group our activity.
   b) The extent to which it is practical for the organisation to take the steps.
   c) Financial and other costs of making the adjustment.
   d) Financial and other costs already spent on adjustments.
   e) The amount of disruption caused by implementing the adjustments.

3. To publish DDA compliant facilities and venues on our Website.

4. To ensure that examples of good practice in managing activities for all including disabled members are publicised on our Website (see Appendix 2)

5. Our work on accessibility and disability will be regularly monitored and reviewed annually.

6. At the time of writing we understand that the u3a National Office insurance position regarding carers is as follows: ‘Members who cannot manage to participate in their chosen u3a activities without help may bring a companion / carer with them who for the time they are in attendance will be covered by the liability insurance provided by the u3a National office. The only exception to this is a professionally employed carer who would have to be covered by an individual liability policy or a

carer working for a company who would be covered by their insurance.'
The Committee will implement and monitor all necessary administration connected with implementing the above.

7. The work will be led by the Accessibility Officer who will receive the support of other Committee members as and when required.

B. Convenors

1. Convenors will be responsible for supporting and implementing the policy as it impacts on members of their group.

2. They will liaise with the Accessibility Officer and Executive Committee as required.

3. We are confident that the facilities we use are compliant with the Disability Discrimination Act (see Appendix 1). If an Interest Group decides to meet in a new venue, then the Convenor should ensure that this is the case and if in doubt, contact any member of the Executive Committee.

C. Members

1. All members should support the policy and seek clarification when required from the Accessibility Officer and / or Committee members.

2. Supporting disabled members often requires simple practical steps such as: all should familiarise themselves with any emergency evacuation procedures including how disabled members are to be helped from the premises.

Home Meetings

Where activities take place in members ’homes it might not be possible to provide facilities for a disabled person. There are issues to consider when hosting disabled members or those needing care.

They include:

- The nature of the disability

- The suitability of the accommodation for the disability e.g. stairs, lavatory facilities, wheelchair access, storage of walking frames.

- The risk of trips and falls

- The presence of a carer

- Risks to other group members and their equipment.

Members residing in a care facility

If the member is significantly impaired either physically or mentally, they may overestimate their abilities and be unable to participate effectively in group activities. In such cases, there may be a Power of Attorney in place and/ or a Care Home Manager or Warden may not wish the member to leave the establishment. Such cases need to be treated on an individual basis - please refer these to the Executive Committee who may have to take further advice from the Third Age Trust.

Every group should consider if they can accommodate modifications to the function of the group to include a member living in care/ sheltered accommodation. The following points are relevant to this:

- The existing group members should be comfortable with the modifications required to meetings if the venue is to be changed.

- No member should feel pressurised into hosting a meeting more often than they would normally do just because their home is suitably adapted.

- There is no obligation for a member to accommodate a disabled member if they do not consider their home suitable.

- There is no requirement to make changes to private homes

beyond what may be termed ‘good housekeeping ’i.e. tidying trailing leads. No one has to buy a ramp or other equipment to allow access over steps - this would be seen as an unreasonable modification for a householder to make for an occasional guest.

- The disabled person is responsible for transport to and from the venue and for the provision of a carer is required (see Accessibility Policy for advice on Insurance).

- It may be necessary to ask a member to cease being a member of a particular group if they do not recognise that they are unable to be a full member of the group due to mental or physical impairment.
  If any member has any queries about this policy or feels that Swanland u3a is not meeting its obligations to a disabled member or members, please contact the Chair.

Appendix 1 - Current Facilities.

- Swanland u3a mainly uses St Barnabas Church Hall and Swanland Village Hall, both are DDA compliant. At times we will use a hotel or restaurant e.g. at Christmas - again these will be DDA compliant.
  The Golf Group uses established club houses which are DDA compliant.

Appendix 2 - Good Practice.

- The Web Administrator is compiling a list of further suitable venues for use by groups all of which must be DDA compliant. Our Walking Groups offer two levels of difficulty. Routes are checked before walks to en- sure that there is appropriate access. Walk leaders ensure that no member falls behind the main group.
  The Zoom Co-ordinator and Web Administrator ensures that lecture details are regularly sent to all members with additional copies sent on request and kept up to date on the Su3a website.

- Reviewed: October 2023